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# Intermarriage Attitude among Ethnic Minority and Majority Groups in the Netherlands: The Role of Family Relations and Immigrant Characteristics<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

Ethnic distance refers to the extent to which people wish to avoid contact with members of ethnic out-groups (Bogardus, 1959). Kinship by marriage is one of the most intimate relationships and, therefore, the domain of life with the highest distance between ethnic groups in society. Marriage is an intimate and often long-term relationship and ethnic intermarriage indicates close interactions across ethnic group boundaries. Factors related to intermarriage have been studied intensively (e.g., Blau, Beeker, and Fitzpatrick, 1984; Kalmijn, 1998; Qian, 1997). Next to opportunities for contacts and third party restrictions, preferences and attitudes towards intermarriage play an important role (Kalmijn, 1998). In this study we study the attitude towards ethnic intermarriage among majority and minority groups in the Netherlands. We focus on the role of family relations and on immigrant characteristics of different ethnic minority groups.

Most studies on ethnic distance do not include the perspective of both majority and minority group members. However, to fully understand inter-ethnic relations and their social consequences, the views of both sides need to be examined (Kalmijn, 1998). Hence, we focus on the majority group of the Dutch and on the numerically four largest minority groups: Turkish-Dutch, Moroccan-Dutch, Surinamese-Dutch and Antillean-Dutch. We examine the intermarriage attitude of the ethnic Dutch towards the ethnic minority groups and the intermarriage attitude of the four minority groups towards the Dutch.

We investigate the association between current family relations and the intermarriage attitude. Existing research on family influences is mainly concerned with the socialization of ethnic attitudes and the intergenerational transmission of social positions from parents to their children (see Fishbein, 2002; Vollebergh, Iedema, and Raaijmakers, 2001). However, there is also the possible impact of the *current* family on the intermarriage attitude. Family cohesion as well as the endorsement of conservative family values might go together with the rejection of ethnic out-groups as kin by marriage. It is also possible, however, that warm and supportive family relations lead to more acceptance of ethnic intermarriage via a higher generalized sense of trust and higher psychological well-being (Glanville and Paxton, 2007).

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Few studies have examined variations in ethnic distance between different ethnic minority groups. These groups, however, are heterogeneous with respect to language proficiency, education, religion, cultural values and traditions. In this study, we examine to what extent immigrant characteristics relate to the intermarriage attitude when we take relevant socio-economic and cultural factors into account. Using insights from theories on integration and assimilation we derive hypotheses on the relation between immigrant characteristics and the intermarriage attitude. Researchers of immigrant integration have emphasized the importance of generation, length of stay, language proficiency, and migration motives for the socio-cultural integration in the host society (CBS, 2008; Dietz, 2000; Hwang, Saenz, and Aguirre, 1997; Kalmijn, 1998; Lieberman and Waters, 1988), but it is unclear whether these characteristics are associated with the attitude towards ethnic intermarriage.

### **Immigrants in the Netherlands**

In the last decades, the Netherlands has experienced a large influx of immigrants. Around 10% of the total 16.4 million inhabitants of the Netherlands originate from non-Western countries, with the majority coming from Islamic countries such as Turkey (373.000) and Morocco (335.000), or from the former Dutch colonies of Suriname (336.000) and the Dutch Antilles (132.000) (CBS, 2008). Most migrants from these groups are first generation migrants, varying from 50% for the Surinamese to 60% for the Antilleans (CBS, 2008). In the early 1960s, Dutch industry started recruiting migrant labor on quite a large-scale. Most of these migrant workers were Turkish and Moroccan men who were either single or had left their families behind in their home country. Many were recruited in the rural areas where Islam played an important role in life. In the mid-1970s a process of family re-unification began, as first the Turks and later the Moroccans were joined by their wives and children. At the same time, large numbers of Dutch nationals from the former colony of Suriname settled in the Netherlands. Migration from the Antilles to the Netherlands has traditionally taken place for reasons of education (Entzinger, 1994). More recently the limited employment opportunities in the Antilles prompted many young adults to migrate to the Netherlands.

### **Ethnic Intermarriage**

Research in Western countries has shown that most forms of ethnic intermarriage between ethnic minority and majority groups have become more common (Kalmijn, 1998). For instance, studies revealed growing out-marriage across birth cohorts for European-American groups, American Indians, Asian Americans, Hispanics and African Americans in the United States (Lieberman and Waters, 1988; Qian and Lichter, 2007), for Asians, Africans and Europeans in Israel (Okun, 2001), and for several ethnic groups in Australia (Jones and Luijkx, 1996). Also in the Netherlands there is a decline of ethnic endogamy, although important ethnic group barriers remain (Kalmijn, Liefbroer, Van Poppel, and Van Solinge, 2006; Kalmijn and Van Tubergen, 2006). Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch predominantly marry within their own ethnic group and not often with an ethnic Dutch partner. In contrast, marriages with a Dutch partner are far more common among the Surinamese-Dutch and the Antillean-Dutch (SCP, 2007).

It is believed that ethnic endogamy indicates group closure, while ethnic intermarriage patterns reveal a strong social acceptance between groups (Kalmijn, 1998). However, when



members of two ethnic groups do not intermarry this does not necessarily mean that both groups reject each other, or that they are 'closed' to outsiders. If one ethnic group (the majority or a minority) is 'closed' whereas the other is 'open', endogamy may still prevail (Kalmijn, 1998). Also at the individual level, heterogamous or endogamous marriages can be interpreted differently. Marrying someone from one's own ethnic group does not necessarily reflect a disapproval of ethnic intermarriages. And marrying someone from another ethnic group is not always a sign of acceptance of other ethnicities because one of the partners can be fully adjusted to the cultural and religious beliefs of the other ethnic group. Furthermore, marriage patterns depend not only on preferences, but also on the opportunities on the marriage market (Kalmijn, 1998). Preferences and attitudes play a role in the occurrence of ethnic intermarriages but little is known about the factors that influence these attitudes among ethnic majority and minority groups (but see, Bobo and Hutchings, 1996; *Johnson and Jacobson 2005*; Tolsma, Lubbers, and Coenders, 2008).

### **Ethnic Attitudes in the Netherlands**

The Dutch have traditionally been known for their tolerance towards minorities and respect for minority interests. For instance, comparative studies on (blatant) prejudice and right-wing voting indicated that the Netherlands was a relatively tolerant nation (Lubbers, Gijsberts, and Scheepers, 2002; Pettigrew et al., 1997) compared to other Western European countries. However, since the beginning of this century, the political and social climate changed considerably from a more multicultural perspective to one that emphasizes Dutch national identity and the need for assimilation of minority groups (Entzinger, 2003). The recent public and political retreat of multiculturalism in favor of assimilation is accompanied with more negative feelings towards ethnic out-groups especially towards Islamic groups (Coenders, Lubbers, Scheepers, and Verkuyten, 2008).

In general, inter-ethnic relations are influenced by ethnic group positions and cultural differences. First, majority and minority groups are typically defined in terms of power and status differences. Majority group members may fear loss of status through close inter-ethnic contacts with minority groups (Hagendoorn, Drogendijk, Tumanov, and Hraba, 1998; Stephan and Stephan, 1996). For minority groups, close contacts with majority group members can increase their status. Second, ethnic distance has also been found to depend on cultural differences related to language, religion and values (Hagendoorn et al., 1998): Ethnic distance appears to be stronger when cultural differences are greater. Several studies have found a hierarchy of preferences for ethnic groups among the ethnic Dutch (see Hagendoorn, 1995). People show the strongest preference for their own group, and next they favor immigrants from western countries, followed by members of ex-colonial groups such as Surinamese and Antilleans and, finally, migrant workers from Islamic countries such as Moroccans and Turks are at the bottom of the hierarchy of preferences. The ex-colonial groups are culturally and religiously more similar to the Dutch and have better socio-economic positions than the Turkish and Moroccan immigrants (SCP, 2007). The central role of race in the context of the United States (Kalmijn, 1993; Lieberman and Waters, 1988; Qian and Lichter, 2001) does not influence inter-ethnic relations in the Netherlands to the same degree because of supposed lower levels of racism (Kalmijn and Van Tubergen, 2006). In public debates and in the media, Islam and Muslims are typically presented and perceived as threatening the national identity, culture, and security. Furthermore, the Moroccan-



Dutch particularly have become symbolic for problems related to ethnic minorities and immigration (see Ter Wal, 2004). This group clearly faces the highest level of threat to the value of their group identity. The condemnation of Moroccans by the public opinion can lead to a strong self-orientation within the Moroccan community, along with a more negative attitude towards the Dutch majority group (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). Thus, the participants of Surinamese and Antillean origin can be expected to have a more favorable attitude towards kinship by marriage with a Dutch person compared to the participants of Turkish and Moroccan origin. Furthermore, because of their stigmatized position the Moroccan-Dutch are expected to have the most negative attitude towards this kind of marriage.

### **Family Relations and Intermarriage Attitude**

Research on family influences on ethnic distance mainly examines the socialization of attitudes, the intergenerational transmission of social positions from parents to their children, and the influence of the material, social and political context that prevailed during the pre-adult years (Kalmijn et al., 2006; Vollebergh et al., 2001). However, the impact of the family might go beyond socialization in the pre-adult years, and beyond the relationship between parents and their children. We focus upon the relationship between current family aspects, such as family norms, family ties and family conservatism, on the one hand, and the attitude towards ethnic kinship by marriage, on the other hand.

There are different theoretical arguments for the relationship between these kind of family aspects and intermarriage attitudes. First, similarity theory states that people like characteristics in others that are similar to their own (Byrne, 1971). Sociologists use the term homophily to indicate that people tend to associate with others who have similar educational, occupational, religious or linguistic characteristics (McPherson, Smith-Lovin, and Cook, 2001). In addition, in social (i.e. family) networks relationships of members are regulated by norms and the sanctioning of non-normative behaviour (Surra and Milardo, 1991). An example is the norm of endogamy that is sometimes emphasized by groups because endogamy helps to maintain group cohesion, values and traditions (Clark-Ibanez and Felmlee, 2004). That means that family cohesion can foster the preference for interactions with others who are culturally similar. Cohesion refers to the bonds or "glue" that hold members of a group together. People from a different cultural background are often seen as threatening the identity and solidarity of one's own group (Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007). This does not only apply to large scale categories but also, or even more so, to small scale or common-bond groups, such as the family. Cohesive families have an incentive to keep 'ethnic strangers' out of the family because these 'strangers' form a risk to the stability and solidarity within the family. Family cohesion is expressed in strong family ties which, for example, are indicated by the frequency of contact between family members and the endorsement of family norms (Burt, 2000; Jetten, Spears, and Manstead, 1997). Therefore, we expected that family cohesion (frequent contacts and the endorsement of family norms) is positively related to the resistance to ethnic intermarriage (Hypothesis 1).

Second, research has shown that people who emphasize conservative values are more likely to display prejudice and negative attitudes towards ethnic out-groups (Duckitt, 1992; Lambert and Chasteen, 1997). Therefore, it is likely that people who endorse conservative family values tend to prefer greater ethnic distance in family relations. In addition, research



has shown that conservative family values are associated with aspects of cohesive family systems, such as the strong normative orientation of the family (Kagitçibasi, 1996; Triandis, 1995). Because of this relationship, it is important to study conservative family values in addition to family cohesion. Furthermore, ethnic groups have been found to differ in their emphasis on family norms and conservative family values. Turkish-Dutch and Moroccan-Dutch people have a more collectivist cultural background and tend to be more traditional in their family attitudes and behaviours than the Surinamese-Dutch and the Antillean-Dutch who, in turn, do not differ much from the ethnic Dutch (SCP, 2007). Ethnic group differences in the endorsement of family norms and conservative family values can account, in part, for the expected group differences in the attitude towards ethnic intermarriage. Thus, we expected that conservative family values are positively related to the resistance to ethnic intermarriage (Hypothesis 2). In addition, it was expected that family norms and conservative family values will, in part, account for the ethnic group differences in inter-ethnic attitudes.

Third, people develop a feeling of trust in others within secure and warm relationships with family members and friends. This feeling can develop into a more generalized sense of trust. Glanville and Paxton (2007) demonstrated that trust developed within the family can translate into a more generalized sense of trust. Generalized trust goes beyond the circle of familiar people and the boundaries of the own social group (Uslaner, 2002). In addition, research has shown that emotional supportive family relationships lead to psychological well-being whereas unsupportive relationships lead to self-uncertainty (Roberts and Bengtson, 1996). Psychological well-being is related to a more open and accepting orientation towards out-groups (Tyler, Boeckmann, Smith, and Yuen, 1997) and self-uncertainty leads to bolstering of one's cultural norms and defensive reactions towards outsiders (Hogg, 2000). Thus, we hypothesized that warm (e.g. affective and emotional supportive) family ties are related to less resistance to ethnic intermarriage (Hypothesis 3).

### **Immigrant Characteristics and Ethnic Distance**

Numerous authors have argued that ethnic intermarriage is a core measure of social integration (Gordon, 1964; Hwang et al., 1997; Lieberman and Waters, 1988), and it is often viewed as the final step in the assimilation process (Gordon, 1964; Qian and Lichter, 2001). We argue that also positive attitudes towards intermarriage can be considered as an indicator of integration, as they provide a signal that immigrants have adopted, or at least accepted, cultural patterns of the majority population (Qian and Lichter, 2007). Therefore, we want to test whether general notions of integration theories help to explain attitudes towards ethnic intermarriage of immigrants.

Classical assimilation theory originated largely from the work of Park (Park and Burgess, 1921), Warner and Srole (1945), and Gordon (1964). Two of the core hypotheses postulated by assimilation theory were that the integration of immigrants would increase 1) with a longer stay in the host country and 2) with successive generations.<sup>2</sup> The underlying idea is that immigrants who stay longer in the host country and later generations of immigrants, are

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<sup>2</sup> It should be remarked that also the age of migration is often identified as an important factor in assimilation theories (Van Tubergen & Kalmijn, 2005). We do not treat this aspect of assimilation theory here.



more strongly socialized in the culture of the host society, and will develop more primary ties with native members of the host society, and are psychologically less oriented and focused on the country of origin. In recent decades, classical assimilation theory has been subjected to a lot of criticism, especially on the ideas that assimilation is an inevitable, straight line and unidirectional outcome for all immigrants, without taking into account differences between minority groups and between receiving country characteristics (see for instance Alba and Nee, 1997; Berry, 1997; Portes and Zhou, 1993). For instance, studies have shown that next to straight line assimilation, other forms of acculturation are also possible (Berry, 1997). Not all groups and individuals undergo acculturation in the same way and it depends simultaneously on the extent to which minority groups wish to maintain their culture of origin, and the degree to which they desire contacts with the majority group. Further, segmented assimilation theory (Portes and Zhou, 1993) offered a framework for understanding why different patterns of adaptation emerge among contemporary immigrants and their children, based on both individual characteristics and conditions of the receiving context, and especially on the interactions between them. Nowadays, it is recognized that the integration of immigrants also depends on aspects of the receiving country, such as the reactions and openness of the majority population and government policy (Portes and Rumbaut, 1996): A minority group's willingness and ability to integrate is influenced by how the majority population treats that particular group.

Although classical assimilation theory turned out not to tell the whole story about the integration of immigrants, most findings did not contradict the assimilation hypotheses. It is rarely found that over the life-course or with successive generations, the socio-cultural integration of immigrants declined (Van Tubergen, 2004). For a large part, the diverse empirical outcomes can be seen as inter-group differences in the speed to which immigrants assimilate or integrate into the host country (Alba and Nee, 1997; Alba and Nee, 2003; Qian and Lichter, 2007). While it has been frequently demonstrated that actual intermarriage patterns increase with length of stay and across successive generations (see for instance Lieberman and Waters, 1988; Kalmijn, 1998; Kalmijn and Van Tubergen, 2006), surprisingly little is known about the degree to which these characteristics also relate to attitudes towards intermarriage. Based on the general notions of assimilation theory, we hypothesized that second generation immigrants (Hypothesis 4a), and immigrants with a longer length of stay (Hypothesis 4b) show less resistance to intermarriage compared to immigrants that are born abroad and with shorter lengths of stay.

In addition, we want to study the relation between intermarriage attitudes and two other immigrant characteristics that have been linked to the cultural integration of immigrants. First, proficiency in the language of the host country is an important condition for full participation in society. It indicates an orientation towards the host country, is crucial for economic participation (Chiswick, Lee, and Miller, 2004), and is an important resource that facilitates inter-ethnic interaction and intimate relationships (Hwang et al. 1997; Martinovic, Maas, and Van Tubergen, 2008; Van Tubergen and Maas, 2007). It gives immigrants the opportunity to communicate with natives, and it might even render such interaction more appealing to them compared to those who do not speak the language as well. Further, cultural similarity facilitates social interactions, and language is an essential part of culture (Van Tubergen and Maas, 2007). Thus, we expected that among immigrants, Dutch language proficiency is negatively related to the resistance to marriage with a Dutch (Hypothesis 4c).

Second, the attitude towards ethnic intermarriage might be related to the original motivation for migration. The decision to migrate is based on a variety of motives associated with safety, labour, education, and family life. In public debates, it is often assumed that restrictive and selective immigration policies are a necessary precondition for integration. For instance, it is believed that family reunification and family formation with someone from the country of origin hampers the social integration of minority groups (Hagendoorn, Veenman, and Vollebergh, 2003 p.4). Immigrants who move for family reasons, are more strongly motivated to preserve their own language, cultural traditions and religious practices compared to immigrants who migrate for economical or educational reasons (Dietz, 2000). Furthermore, family immigrants might be relatively less oriented towards the host country and maintain stronger ties with the country of origin. Therefore, we expected that people who migrated out of family reasons are more inclined to reject ethnic Dutch people as kin by marriage compared to people who migrated for economic or educational reasons (Hypothesis 4d).

### **Correlates of Ethnic Distance**

In this study we included age, gender, education, income, having a partner, number of children, religious affiliation and church attendance as control variables. Previous studies have shown that education (Schuman, Steeh, Bobo, and Krysan, 1997) and income (Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Coenders, 2002) are negatively related to ethnic distance. Older people show more ethnic distance than younger ones, particularly in the domain of family (e.g. Johnson and Jacobson, 2005). Generally, results indicate less ethnic distance among females than males (Johnson and Marini, 1998). However, Muir and McGlamery (1984) showed that men are more likely to accept persons of other ethnic groups in more intimate relationships (e.g., to marry, date, or share a room), whereas women are more likely to accept less intimate interethnic relationships (e.g., as a neighbor or a co-worker). There is a close relationship between religion and ethnic distance. The more religious an individual is, the larger the ethnic distance (see Batson and Burris, 1994; Scheepers, Gijsberts, and Hello, 2002).

### **METHODS**

To test the hypotheses, we analysed data from the 'main' and 'immigrant' samples of the Netherlands Kinship Panel Study (Dykstra, 2005). The NKPS main sample is a large-scale study of family relations among 8,161 participants (aged 18 to 79) within households in the Netherlands. In the NKPS, participants reported on several family relationships: with their partner, siblings, parents and children. The immigrant sample was drawn from 13 Dutch cities in which the majority of immigrants live. It includes 1,410 participants from Turkish, Moroccan, Surinamese or Antillean origin. The topics covered in the main and immigrant questionnaires were similar, and provided comparable data.

The NKPS had an overall response rate of 47%, which is comparable to that of other large-scale family surveys in the Netherlands (De Leeuw and De Heer, 2001). The response rate among the immigrants was in the same range as that of the Dutch (from 41 per cent for the Surinamese-Dutch, to 52 per cent for the Turkish-Dutch). The participants were interviewed in their homes, in most cases by an interviewer of the same ethnic background. In this study we combined both samples into one dataset including the ethnic Dutch and the four



immigrant groups. In the analyses, we considered only those participants who returned the self-completion questionnaire and reported on the relationship with at least two family members. This latter criterion was used to ensure that the family solidarity measures were not based on a single relationship. Furthermore, participants with missing values on the dependent or independent variables were excluded. After selection, the sample consisted of 5,897 ethnic Dutch, 332 Turkish-Dutch, 295 Moroccan-Dutch, 307 Surinamese-Dutch, and 327 Antillean-Dutch participants.

## **Measures**

### *Dependent Variables*

Participants were asked to indicate to what extent they would disapprove of their (actual or imagined) children's decision to marry a spouse from a different ethnic group. For the four immigrant groups the question was: 'Would it bother you if one of your children would marry a Dutch person?'. For the Dutch participants, ethnic distance was measured by asking three questions on their attitude towards three ethnic out-groups: 'Would it bother you if one of your children would marry a Turkish [Moroccan, Surinamese] person?'. There was no information in the NKPS survey on the attitude towards intermarriage with an Antillean person. Response categories were, (1) 'would bother me a lot', (2) 'would bother me a little', (3) 'neutral', (4) 'would not bother me', (5) 'would not bother me at all'. The scale was reversed so that a higher score indicates more resistance to ethnic intermarriage. The Dutch participants had the highest resistance to a marriage with a Moroccan person ( $M = 3.34$ ), followed by a Turkish person ( $M = 3.23$ ), and they reported the least resistance towards a Surinamese person ( $M = 3.10$ ). Paired samples t-tests showed that all the differences between the three mean scores were significant ( $p < .05$ ). However, the three questions were very highly correlated and Cronbach's alpha for these three items was .95. Therefore, an averaged score was used for the resistance of marriage with an ethnic minority group member. Higher scores indicated more resistance to ethnic intermarriages.

### *Independent Variables*

We included different family relational aspects. Family norms and family contact were two indicators of family cohesion. The exchange of emotional support and feelings of affection were indicators for warm family ties. Family conservatism was indicated by the endorsement of traditional family values.

*Family norms* were measured with 5 items; 'Children should look after their sick parents', 'In old age, parents must be able to live in with their children', 'Children who live close to their parents should visit them at least once a week', 'Parents should provide lodging to their adult children if they need it', and 'Grandparents should be prepared to look after their grandchildren regularly'. Five-point scales were used ranging from 1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree. The five items were combined in one scale by taking the average score ( $\alpha = .80$ ). A higher score indicates a stronger endorsement of the norm of family obligation.

*Family contact* was measured by the frequency of face-to-face contact and of telephone and/or (e-)mail contact in the past 12 months with siblings, parents and children of the

participants. The response categories varied from 1 = never to 7 = daily. To obtain a single contact variable, the mean score on both contact variables and for all family members was computed.

*Family emotional support* was measured by the exchange of emotional support (e.g. exchange of personal interest and personal advice) in the last three months between the participants and his or her siblings, parents and children. Response categories were 0 = not at all, 1 = once or twice and 2 = several times. A score for family emotional support was created by computing the average scores on the exchange of the different types of support with at least two family members.

*Family affection* indicates feelings of affection for the family and was measured with four items in the anchor's self-completion questionnaire. The items were 'When I do something for my family, I do it because I care about them', 'I rely on my family more than on my friends', 'I prefer discussing problems with my family rather than my friends', and 'I meet with friends rather than with my family'.

The answer categories ranged from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*. The negatively formulated item was recoded. We used a scale of *family affection* by computing an average score ( $\alpha = .62$ ). A higher score corresponds with more feelings of (family) affection.

*Family conservatism* was measured by four items about the importance of marriage and traditional family roles. The items were, 'Men and women are allowed to live together outside marriage', 'A woman must quit her job when she becomes a mother', 'The parents' opinion must play an important role in the choice of a partner for their child', and 'It's best if children live at home until they get married'. Response categories ranged from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree. A higher score indicates stronger endorsement of (traditional) family values. ( $\alpha = .76$ ).

The *ethnic background* of the participants is based on their country of birth and that of their parents.<sup>3</sup> Participants born in the country of origin or with at least one parent born in that country were assigned to one of the four immigrant groups.

#### *Immigrant Characteristics*

For measuring the *migration motives*, participants were asked: 'What was the most important reason for your (last) move to the Netherlands?'. Immigrants who migrated for family reasons (the answer categories 'family reunion', 'marriage', 'family formation' and 'came with parents') were combined into one group. This group was compared to those who migrated for other reasons ('work', 'studies', 'social security', and 'political situation').

#### *Immigrant Generation*

Participants' country of birth was used to assess who was born outside the Netherlands (first generation) or in the Netherlands (second generation). The percentage of second

<sup>3</sup> In our sample, 90% of the migrants have parents that have the same ethnic background as the respondent. For less than five per cent of the respondents one of the parents is from Dutch descent.



generation immigrants is relatively low in our sample compared to the population. This is due to the age criterion: Respondents had to be at least 18 years or older. The second generation has of course no migration motive. Therefore, we compared three groups of participants. First generation immigrants who migrated out of family reasons ('family migration motive'), first generation immigrants who migrated out of other reasons ('other migration motive'), and second generation immigrants.

*Language proficiency* was assessed by asking the interviewer 'How fluent is the respondent in Dutch?'. The answer categories were; (1) 'bad', (2) 'mediocre' and (3) 'good'.

*Length of stay* of the immigrants was measured by subtracting the year of migration from interview year. Following Kalmijn and Van Tubergen (2006) we based the year of migration for the second generation immigrants on their birth year. Since a dummy variable is included for the second generation immigrants, the imputation value does not influence the effect of length of stay.

### *Individual Background Variables*

We controlled for possible confounding factors by including the following variables. The *age* of the respondent was measured in years. The dichotomous variable *gender* indicated whether the participant was male (0) or female (1). Participants were asked about the total number of *children* they have had throughout their life. The variable *married* indicated whether the participant was unmarried (0) or married (1). *Educational attainment* was measured by the highest educational level obtained in the Netherlands or abroad. The educational level was divided into 8 categories, varying from (0) 'no education completed' to (7) 'university education'. Immigrant participants were asked to indicate their monthly *household income* in pre-defined categories, varying from (1) '0-550 euro' to (11) '3000 and higher'. For the Dutch majority group, participants' monthly income was combined with their partners' income in order to calculate the total net household income per month. Household income was then recoded into the same 11 categories as for the immigrant participants. Missing values on income were replaced by the mean of the ethnic group. Two measures of religiosity were included in the analysis, namely *religious affiliation* and *church attendance*. Participants were asked whether they belonged to a religious denomination. A dichotomous variable with (1) church member and (0) no church member was included in the analysis. Due to problems of multicollinearity with ethnic background (almost all Turks and Moroccans are Muslim), the different religious denominations could not be taken into account. *Church attendance* was phrased as 'attending services of a church or community of faith' with four answering categories ranging from (0) never, (1) a few times a year, (2) a few times a month, to (3) a few times a week.

## RESULTS

### **Descriptive Findings**

Table 1 shows the descriptives (means and standard deviations) of the independent variables by ethnic group. Ethnic group differences in the family measures were examined with analysis of variance and post-hoc tests (Bonferroni). It turns out that there are three clusters of groups for the endorsement of family norms and for conservative family values. The Turkish-

Table 1:

Descriptives of the Independent Variables by Ethnic Group (N=7,158)

| Range                     | Dutch<br>(n=5,897) |                   | Surinamese<br>(n=307) |                   | Antilleans<br>(n=327) |                   | Turkish<br>(n=332) |                   | Moroccan<br>(n=295) |                   |       |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------|
|                           | M                  | SD                | M                     | SD                | M                     | SD                | M                  | SD                | M                   | SD                |       |
| Control variables         |                    |                   |                       |                   |                       |                   |                    |                   |                     |                   |       |
| Education                 | 0-7                | 4.20              | 1.79                  | 3.35              | 1.93                  | 3.91              | 2.12               | 2.11              | 1.86                | 1.96              | 2.17  |
| Household income          | 1-11               | 4.90              | 2.88                  | 5.56              | 2.97                  | 5.13              | 3.19               | 5.39              | 2.56                | 4.12              | 1.86  |
| Age                       | 18-79              | 46.63             | 14.53                 | 43.38             | 12.84                 | 37.87             | 11.97              | 38.93             | 11.46               | 38.69             | 12.73 |
| Female                    | 0-1                | .59               | .49                   | .63               | .48                   | .51               | .50                | .45               | .50                 | .41               | .49   |
| Children                  | 0-11               | 1.69              | .49                   | 2.09              | 1.93                  | 1.49              | 1.65               | 2.30              | 1.50                | 2.68              | 2.38  |
| Married                   | 0-1                | .58               | 1.41                  | .35               | .48                   | .22 <sup>a</sup>  | .41                | .78               | .41                 | .77               | .42   |
| Religious affiliation     | 0-1                | .53               | .50                   | .79               | .41                   | .69               | .46                | .97               | .17                 | .99               | .08   |
| Church attendance         | 0-3                | .72               | 1.00                  | .92               | 1.04                  | .89               | 1.06               | 1.57              | 1.17                | 1.60              | 1.30  |
| Family relations          |                    |                   |                       |                   |                       |                   |                    |                   |                     |                   |       |
| Family conservatism       | 1-5                | 1.97 <sup>a</sup> | .71                   | 2.42 <sup>b</sup> | .87                   | 2.27 <sup>b</sup> | .72                | 3.51 <sup>c</sup> | .86                 | 3.70 <sup>d</sup> | .75   |
| Family norms              | 1-5                | 2.90 <sup>a</sup> | .65                   | 3.40 <sup>b</sup> | .88                   | 3.19 <sup>c</sup> | .70                | 3.90 <sup>d</sup> | .67                 | 4.24 <sup>e</sup> | .63   |
| Family contact            | 1-7                | 4.17 <sup>b</sup> | .95                   | 4.15 <sup>b</sup> | 1.33                  | 3.68 <sup>a</sup> | 1.23               | 4.11 <sup>b</sup> | 1.46                | 4.37 <sup>c</sup> | 1.39  |
| Family affection          | 1-5                | 3.42 <sup>a</sup> | .64                   | 3.59 <sup>b</sup> | .79                   | 3.65 <sup>b</sup> | .62                | 3.96 <sup>c</sup> | .68                 | 3.77 <sup>d</sup> | .76   |
| Emotional support         | 1-3                | 2.17 <sup>a</sup> | .44                   | 2.39 <sup>c</sup> | .52                   | 2.11 <sup>a</sup> | .57                | 2.10 <sup>a</sup> | .62                 | 2.25 <sup>b</sup> | .50   |
| Immigrant characteristics |                    |                   |                       |                   |                       |                   |                    |                   |                     |                   |       |
| Length of stay            | 0-52               | -                 | -                     | 25.55             | 9.23                  | 18.01             | 11.56              | 20.93             | 8.61                | 19.63             | 8.95  |



Table 1 (Contd):

|                         | Range | Dutch<br>(n=5,897) |    | Surinamese<br>(n=307) |     | Antilleans<br>(n=327) |     | Turkish<br>(n=332) |     | Moroccan<br>(n=295) |     |
|-------------------------|-------|--------------------|----|-----------------------|-----|-----------------------|-----|--------------------|-----|---------------------|-----|
|                         |       | M                  | SD | M                     | SD  | M                     | SD  | M                  | SD  | M                   | SD  |
| Language proficiency    | 1-3   | -                  | -  | 2.94                  | .26 | 2.95                  | .25 | 2.24               | .75 | 2.49                | .68 |
| Family migration motive | 0-1   | -                  | -  | .45                   | .50 | .21                   | .41 | .65                | .48 | .60                 | .49 |
| Other migration motive  | 0-1   | -                  | -  | .44                   | .50 | .67                   | .47 | .25                | .44 | .34                 | .48 |
| Second generation       | 0-1   | -                  | -  | .11                   | .31 | .12                   | .33 | .10                | .30 | .06                 | .23 |

\* Row means with different superscripts (a,b,c) represent significant differences at  $p < .05$ . Source: NKPS 2002/ 2003

<sup>4</sup> The percentage of married Antilleans (22%) might seem remarkably low. This is due to the fact that Antillean-Dutch are relatively often single, and cohabitate often without being married (CBS, 2008).

Dutch and the Moroccan-Dutch endorse these norms and values more strongly than the other three groups, and the Moroccan-Dutch have a significantly higher score than the Turkish-Dutch. The Surinamese-Dutch and Antillean-Dutch differ significantly from the ethnic Dutch, and the Antillean-Dutch have a higher score on family norms than the Surinamese-Dutch. The ethnic Dutch endorse family norms and conservative family values the least. Feelings of family affection follow a similar ethnic pattern, whereby Turkish-Dutch have the highest score on feelings of affection and the ethnic Dutch the lowest. In addition, the Moroccan-Dutch have the highest level of family contact, whereas the Antillean-Dutch reported the lowest levels of family contact. The ethnic group differences in emotional support are relatively small with the Surinamese-Dutch and the Moroccan-Dutch having a somewhat higher score compared to the other three groups.

### **Family Relations and the Resistance to Ethnic Intermarriage**

Hierarchical regression analysis was performed to test the hypothesized relationships between family characteristics and the resistance of ethnic intermarriages. In doing so, we weighted for differences in ethnic group size in order to ensure that the results are not due to the numerical dominance of the largest ethnic group (i.e., the ethnic Dutch). The regression analysis were carried out in three steps. The model in the first step contains the ethnic groups with the ethnic Dutch serving as the reference category. In Model 2, the control variables were entered: education, household income, age, gender, religious affiliation, church attendance, marital status and the number of children. This shows us to what extent ethnic group differences are due to differences in these characteristics. In the third model the influence of the family measures (family conservatism, family norms, family contact, family affection, and family emotional support) are entered to the regression equation. We computed sheaf coefficients to determine the standardized regression coefficient (Beta) of the ethnic groups in the analysis. The sheaf coefficient is the combined effect of a set of nominal variables. The variables are combined additively using weights derived from an ordinary least squares regression. This makes it possible to compare the total effect of the ethnic group differences on the resistance of ethnic intermarriage across the different models.

The results in Model 1 show that the participants of Turkish, Antillean and Surinamese origin have less resistance compared to the Dutch, whereas the Moroccans indicate higher resistance. The regression analysis indicates that ethnic background is strongly related to the level of resistance with a total explained variance of 44%. An additional one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) indicated that the four immigrant groups differ significantly in their attitude towards marriage with a Dutch person, ( $F(3,1261) = 322.81$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Post-hoc analyses showed that all group differences were significant with the Moroccan-Dutch having the most resistance ( $M = 3.54$ ), followed by the Turkish-Dutch ( $M = 2.73$ ), the Surinamese-Dutch ( $M = 1.50$ ), and the Antillean-Dutch ( $M = 1.30$ ) who practically have no resistance. The mean score for the ethnic Dutch participants was 3.22.

Model 2 added the control variables to the initial model, which led to an increase of the variance to .47. In this model the ethnic group differences in resistance remain quite large (beta decreases from .66 to .61). The differences between the Dutch, on the one hand, and the participants of Turkish, Surinamese and Antillean origin, on the other hand, were even



greater. However, the difference in attitude between the Dutch and the Moroccan-Dutch was smaller and no longer significant.

In Model 2, education, household income and age were negatively related to the resistance towards ethnic intermarriage. The higher the level of education, the higher the household income, and the older the participants, the less resistance was indicated. In addition, women showed higher levels of resistance than men. Furthermore, the two variables related to family structure had a positive effect on the resistance towards ethnic intermarriage. The number of children and being married were positively related to resistance. Religious affiliation and church attendance were also positively associated with the resistance to ethnic intermarriage.

In Model 3, the family characteristics were included: the explained variance increased to .50. Compared to the first model, all immigrant groups, including the Moroccan-Dutch, have lower levels of resistance than the Dutch. The effect of 'ethnic group' decreased from .61 to .57. This indicates that the family characteristics explained a small part of the ethnic group differences in resistance. However, in model 3 the difference in ethnic distance between the ethnic Dutch and the immigrant groups (particularly the Moroccan-Dutch and the Turkish-Dutch), increased compared to the first two models. After the inclusion of the family characteristics, education and religious affiliation were no longer significantly associated with the intermarriage attitude. As expected, the endorsement of conservative family values was positively associated with the resistance of ethnic intermarriage. Stronger endorsement of these values is related to higher resistance towards these marriages. Furthermore and as expected, the two measures of family cohesion were positively related to the resistance to ethnic intermarriage. Stronger family norms and more family contacts were independently related to higher levels of resistance. In addition, family affection was negatively associated with resistance. Thus, affective family ties decreased the resistance towards a marriage with an ethnic out-group member. The exchange of emotional support within families was not related to the intermarriage attitude.

### **Immigrant Characteristics and the Resistance to Ethnic Intermarriage**

In an additional regression analysis with the four immigrant groups, the immigration characteristics were added to model 2 (Table 3). We excluded age in this model to avoid problems of multicollinearity with length of stay.

Also in this model, the explained variance was high ( $r^2 = .49$ ). The results show that adding the immigrant characteristics to the model significantly increased the explained variance ( $F_{\text{change}} = 4.21, p < .05$ ), and decreased the total effect of the ethnic minority group differences. In line with our expectations, Dutch language proficiency was negatively related to the resistance to ethnic intermarriage. Immigrants who speak the Dutch language relatively well were less inclined to resist such a marriage.

In addition, we compared three categories of immigrants: the first generation immigrants that migrated for family reasons, the first generation immigrants that moved for other reasons, and second generation 'immigrants'. We varied the reference category to test the significance of the differences between these categories. As expected, participants who migrated to the Netherlands for family related reasons (e.g. family reunification) showed higher levels of

Table 2:

Family Relations and the Resistance to Ethnic Intermarriage (N=7,158)

|                          | Model 1  |      |         | Model 2  |      |         | Model 3  |      |         |
|--------------------------|----------|------|---------|----------|------|---------|----------|------|---------|
|                          | B        | SE B | $\beta$ | B        | SE B | $\beta$ | B        | SE B | $\beta$ |
| Ethnic background        |          |      |         |          |      |         |          |      |         |
| (Dutch=ref)              |          |      |         |          |      |         |          |      |         |
| Moroccan                 | .32***   |      |         | -.01     | .05  |         | -.48***  | .05  |         |
| Turk                     | -.49***  |      |         | -.74***  | .05  |         | -1.11*** | .05  |         |
| Surinamese               | -1.73*** |      |         | -1.78*** | .04  |         | -1.91*** | .04  |         |
| Antillean                | -1.92*** |      |         | -1.92*** | .04  |         | -1.98*** | .04  |         |
| <i>Sheaf coefficient</i> |          |      | .66     |          |      | .61     |          |      | .57     |
| Control variables        |          |      |         |          |      |         |          |      |         |
| Education                |          |      |         | -.04     | .01  | -.06*** | -.01     | .01  | -.01    |
| Household income         |          |      |         | -.04     | .01  | -.08*** | -.03     | .01  | -.06*** |
| Age                      |          |      |         | -.01     | .00  | -.05*** | -.01     | .00  | -.04*** |
| Female                   |          |      |         | .09      | .03  | .03**   | .14      | .03  | .05***  |
| Married                  |          |      |         | .15      | .03  | .05***  | .13      | .03  | .05***  |
| Children                 |          |      |         | .06      | .01  | .08***  | .04      | .01  | .06***  |
| Religious affiliation    |          |      |         | .09      | .04  | .03*    | .03      | .03  | .01     |
| Church attendance        |          |      |         | .08      | .01  | .07***  | .03      | .01  | .02*    |



Table 2 (Contd):

|                                | Model 1 |      |         | Model 2 |      |         | Model 3 |      |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|
|                                | B       | SE B | $\beta$ | B       | SE B | $\beta$ | B       | SE B | $\beta$ |
| Family relations               |         |      |         |         |      |         |         |      |         |
| Family conservatism            |         |      |         |         |      |         | .30     | .02  | .23***  |
| Family norms                   |         |      |         |         |      |         | .10     | .02  | .06***  |
| Family contact                 |         |      |         |         |      |         | .04     | .01  | .04***  |
| Family affection               |         |      |         |         |      |         | -.07    | .02  | -.04*** |
| Emotional support              |         |      |         |         |      |         | -.01    | .02  | -.00    |
| Intercept                      |         |      | 3       |         |      | 3.46    |         |      | 2.51    |
| Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>        |         |      |         |         |      | .47     |         |      | .50     |
| F for change in R <sup>2</sup> |         |      | 1410    |         |      | 52.35   |         |      | 88.45   |

\*p < .05 \*\* p < .01 \*\*\* p < .001. Source: NKPS 2002/ 2003

Table 3:  
Immigrant Characteristics and the Resistance to Ethnic Intermarriage (N=1,228)

|                                    | Model 1 |      |         | Model 2 |      |         |
|------------------------------------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|
|                                    | B       | SE B | $\beta$ | B       | SE B | $\beta$ |
| Ethnic background (Antilleans=ref) |         |      |         |         |      |         |
| Moroccan                           | 1.55*** | .11  |         | 1.42*** | .11  |         |
| Turk                               | .94***  | .10  |         | .76***  | .11  |         |
| Surinamese                         | .09     | .08  |         | .07     | .09  |         |
| <i>Sheaf coefficient</i>           |         |      | .46     |         |      | .42     |
| Controls                           |         |      |         |         |      |         |
| Education                          | .00     | .02  | .00     | .01     | .02  | .02     |
| Household income                   | -.04    | .01  | -.07**  | -.04    | .01  | -.07**  |
| Female                             | .16     | .06  | .06**   | .09     | .06  | .03     |
| Married                            | .13     | .07  | .05     | .12     | .07  | .05     |
| Children                           | .02     | .02  | .03     | .02     | .02  | .03     |
| Religious affiliation              | -.08    | .09  | -.02    | -.06    | .10  | -.02    |
| Church attendance                  | .04     | .03  | .03     | .04     | .03  | .04     |
| Family relations                   |         |      |         |         |      |         |
| Family conservatism                | .29     | .04  | .21***  | .28     | .04  | .21***  |
| Family norms                       | .12     | .04  | .08**   | .12     | .04  | .07**   |
| Family contact                     | .05     | .02  | .05*    | .06     | .02  | .06*    |
| Family affection                   | -.09    | .04  | -.05*   | -.09    | .04  | -.05*   |
| Emotional support                  | .01     | .06  | .00     | .01     | .05  | .00     |



Table 2 (Contd):

|                                | Model 1 |      |         | Model 2 |      |         |
|--------------------------------|---------|------|---------|---------|------|---------|
|                                | B       | SE B | $\beta$ | B       | SE B | $\beta$ |
| Immigrant characteristics      |         |      |         |         |      |         |
| Length of stay                 |         |      |         | -.00    | .00  | -.02    |
| Language proficiency           |         |      |         | -.16    | .06  | -.07**  |
| Migrant category               |         |      |         |         |      |         |
| (Family migration motive=ref)  |         |      |         |         |      |         |
| Other migration motive         |         |      |         | -.20**  | .07  |         |
| Second generation              |         |      |         | -.11    | .11  |         |
| Sheaf coefficient              |         |      |         |         |      | .07     |
| Intercept                      |         |      | .43     |         | 1.05 |         |
| R <sup>2</sup>                 |         |      | .49     |         | .50  |         |
| F for change in R <sup>2</sup> |         |      | 16.19   |         | 4.21 |         |

\*p &lt; .05 \*\* p &lt; .01 \*\*\* p &lt; .001. Source: NKPS 2002/ 2003

resistance to intermarriage than those who migrated for other reasons (i.e., educational, economical or safety).

Although analysis of variance indicated that the intermarriage attitude of the first (2.32) and second 'generation' (1.80) differed significantly ( $F(1,1226) = 15.56, p < .05$ ), the multiple regression analyses revealed no difference between first generation immigrants and participants born in the Netherlands. The predicted impact of length of stay on the opposition to ethnic intermarriage was not found. Further, while the length of stay showed bivariate a negatively relation with the opposition to ethnic intermarriage ( $R = -.08, p < .05$ ), no association was found in the full model. Apparently, our model takes the factors that contribute to differences in resistance between generations and between immigrants who differ with respect to length of stay into account. Compared to Table 2, the effects of the family characteristics were quite similar: Family norms, family contact and family conservatism related positively to the opposition to intermarriage, whereas family affection showed a negative association.

## DISCUSSION

Using data from a representative sample designed to facilitate comparisons between immigrant and Dutch families, this study investigated the ethnic intermarriage attitude among the Dutch majority and four immigrant groups: Turkish-Dutch, Moroccan-Dutch, Surinamese-Dutch and Antillean-Dutch. We focused on the attitude of the Dutch towards marriage with an ethnic minority group member and the attitude of the ethnic minorities towards marriage with an ethnic Dutch person. The role of family relations and immigrant characteristics for these attitudes was examined.

Our models were rather capable of explaining the attitude towards intermarriage, which was largely due to the strong impact of ethnicity on the intermarriage attitude. The findings indicate large differences in the resistance to ethnic intermarriage between the five ethnic groups. Only a small part of these differences was accounted for in the different steps of the analyses. The ethnic group differences in resistance remained strong after controlling statistically for family cohesion and family conservatism as well as for various other variables (e.g., education, income). This indicates that other factors are involved, such as religious denomination and social status. In agreement with the role of group status, the ethnic Dutch majority group showed relatively high levels of resistance compared to the four ethnic minority groups. This confirms the importance of the group status position for ethnic distance, which has been demonstrated, for example, in studies on ethnic hierarchies (Hagendoorn, 1995).

However, the Moroccan-Dutch reported the highest level of resistance. This might be due to the fact that this group has the lowest social status, is strongly criticized in the Netherlands and faces the highest levels of identity threat. High levels of threat to the value of the group can lead to increased in-group identification and out-group derogation. To enhance the value and distinctiveness of their in-group and to maintain a positive ethnic identity, Moroccan-Dutch people can distance themselves from the Dutch (Verkuyten and Zaremba, 2005). However, it should be noted that compared to the Dutch participants, the Moroccan-Dutch showed less resistance to an ethnic intermarriage after the family characteristics



were taken into account statistically. This suggests that part of the high resistance among the Moroccan-Dutch is due to their relatively high level of family contacts and their strong endorsement of family norms and conservative family values. Family obligations and traditional family values are quite strong in ethnic groups that have a collectivist cultural background, such as the Moroccan-Dutch (SCP, 2007; Triandis, 1995). The resistance to marriage with a Dutch person was much lower among the Surinamese-Dutch and Antilleans-Dutch compared to the Moroccan-Dutch and the Turkish-Dutch. Immigrants from Suriname and the Antilleans share a common (colonial) history with the Dutch and are therefore culturally more similar to the Dutch, whereas the cultural and religious (Muslim) background of immigrants from Turkey and Morocco is quite different.

In the literature, low levels of intermarriage are often viewed as a lack of integration of migrant groups (Qian and Lichter, 2001; Lieberman and Waters, 1988). However, intermarriage not only depends on the readiness of ethnic minority groups to integrate, but also on the openness and acceptance of the majority group. The relatively high level of resistance to ethnic intermarriage of the Dutch majority is probably also an important factor for intermarriage patterns in the Netherlands. This corroborates the importance of including the perspective from both sides while studying ethnic intermarriage.

Another important finding of this study is that not only the ethnic group, but also current family characteristics are relevant for understanding the resistance to ethnic intermarriage. Previous research on family influences has mainly focused on processes of socialization and the transmission of social positions (Vollebergh et al., 2001), whereas our study indicates that the structure and functioning of the current family context is also important for people's attitude towards ethnic intermarriage. It turns out that different family characteristics are relevant because these are independently related to the intermarriage attitude. In addition, the relationships differed for various aspects of the family. There were negative, as well as positive statistical effects on the acceptance of ethnic out-group members as close kin by marriage. The finding that family norms and family contacts were positively related to the resistance of ethnic intermarriage, confirms our first hypothesis. When family ties are tightly knit, family members have an incentive to keep 'ethnic strangers' out of the family. Previous studies showed that solidarity and close group ties can act as a principle of exclusion when there is the perception of threat and when individuals are not considered to be part of one's cultural in-group (Sniderman and Hagendoorn, 2007). Our results suggest that these general notions can also be applied in the context of the acceptance of ethnic out-group members as family members.

The results also supported our second hypothesis. Stronger endorsement of conservative family values was related to higher resistance. This finding is similar to the well-known relationship between conservatism and prejudice (see Duckitt, 1992) and also suggests that ethnic outsiders are considered a threat to traditional family values. In addition, previous research has shown that traditional family values are related to family cohesion (Triandis, 1995). By including a measure of family conservatism, we were able to assess the independent effect of family cohesion (family norms and contacts) on the resistance to ethnic intermarriage.

The third hypothesis on the effect of warm family ties for the acceptance of ethnic intermarriage was also (partly) confirmed. Although we found no association between the



exchange of emotional support and the intermarriage attitude, feelings of (family) affection showed a negative relation with opposing ethnic intermarriage. Hence, we found evidence for the proposition that warm and trusting family relations can lead to more tolerance and a more open view towards ethnic out-group members (Glanville and Paxton, 2007). A likely reason for this is that these kind of family relations support the development of psychological well-being and (generalized) trust in others. In turn, well-being and trust can lead to a more accepting attitude.

For a more in-depth understanding of the differences between immigrants, we derived hypotheses on the relation between several immigrant characteristics and the resistance to ethnic intermarriage. Ethnic intermarriage is believed to be an indicator of the social integration or assimilation of immigrant groups (Blau et al., 1984; Qian and Lichter, 2001). Therefore we applied insights of integration and assimilation theories to derive hypotheses on the relation between several immigrant characteristics and the attitude towards intermarriage. We examined four immigrant characteristics that in previous studies have been found to be associated to social integration indicators, such as actual ethnic intermarriages or other social contacts (Kalmijn and Tubergen 2006; Martinovic et al., 2008). Our study indeed found evidence of the importance of different immigrant characteristics for the attitude towards intermarriage. As expected (Hypothesis 4c), it turned out that Dutch language proficiency was negatively related to the resistance to marriage with a Dutch person. Thus, the command of the Dutch language does not only relate to actual inter-ethnic interactions as found by previous studies (Hwang et al., 1997), but also to the preference for intimate contacts. This also supports the idea that cultural distance hampers the (preferences for) social interaction with ethnic out-group members (Hagendoorn et al. 1998; Kalmijn, 1998), and the more general notions of the similarity-attraction paradigm of Byrne (1971). We reckon that there are more sophisticated ways to measure language proficiency than we did in our study. Instead of the observation of the interviewer, it is preferable to assess language ability via tests or interviewers that are trained in language analysis. However, one should note that, despite possible measurement error, we still find an effect of language ability on the intermarriage attitude. Further, in line with hypothesis 4d, people who had migrated for family reasons showed higher levels of resistance to intermarriage than immigrants who migrated for other reasons (e.g. education, work, safety). This finding supports the claim that immigrants who move for family reasons are more oriented towards their own ethnic group and towards the preservation of their cultural traditions (Dietz, 2000). This might be the outcome of the fact that this category of immigrants did not choose the host country themselves. One of the aims of the Dutch immigration law (2002) is to diminish the number of so-called 'import-brides', because it is believed that marriage partners from the country of origin present a problem to the social integration of immigrant groups. Our results suggest that family related migration leads to a higher resistance to accept Dutch people as kin by marriage. Contrary to what was expected based on assimilation theory, the findings show that generational status (Hypothesis 4a) and length of stay (Hypothesis 4b) are not related to the ethnic intermarriage attitude. The results reveal that the difference in resistance between generations and between immigrants with varying lengths of stay, disappear when factors such as education, age, religiosity and language proficiency are taken into account. Hence, these factors appear to be important for understanding why there is a difference in resistance to ethnic intermarriage between generations of immigrants and between immigrants with different lengths of stay. A similar



result has been found in other studies (e.g., Kalmijn, 1998). Further attention could be given to examine in more detail the precise mechanisms that account for the effects of the immigrant characteristics on the acceptance of ethnic outsiders as close kin by marriage.

Future studies could also more deeply investigate the relationship between family characteristics and intermarriage attitudes. Although family contact and the exchange of emotional support within the family were based on multiple family relationships, both measures reflected the experiences and perceptions of the individual participants. In addition, the measures of family norms, family affection and family values were assessed at the individual level and not at the level of the family. The attitudes of family members should be assessed in order to understand the full impact of the current family context on people's attitudes. Future studies could also test the role of family cohesion, emotional good relations and traditional family values on actual intermarriage patterns. The effects of the family characteristics on actual marriages might even be stronger than on attitudes because family norms can be expected to have a greater impact on behaviors than attitudes. It is also important to study among the different immigrant groups what they think about marriages with members of other minority groups. In the current study we focused on the immigrants' attitude towards the Dutch but a multi-ethnic society also involves the acceptance of inter-ethnic relations between minority groups.

In conclusion, this study shows that in the Netherlands there are strong ethnic group boundaries in the acceptance of ethnic out-group members as close kin by marriage. These boundaries remain strong when a number of background characteristics and several indicators of family relations are taken into account. This suggests that differences in status positions and cultural and religious differences are responsible for these boundaries. In addition, the findings indicate that family relations are important for understanding people's attitude towards ethnic intermarriages. Different aspects of the relations within the family are related to this attitude and also in different ways. In families that are relatively closed and that emphasize conservative family values, people tend to show more resistance to ethnic intermarriage, whereas an affective and warm family context contributes to more openness to ethnic outsiders.

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